Unit III: Stepping into the Academic Conversation

**Part One:**

For this paper, you will write a **6-page** researched, argumentative paper on an issue and/or a debate related to your college major or academic field. If you’re undecided, pick a major or academic field that interests you.

One of the main focuses of your paper should be on synthesizing the previous and/or existing conversation on the topic. Where do these scholars’ concerns intersect? On what points do they agree with each other? On what points do they seem to diverge? Is there a gap in the conversation, something vital that you think researchers should be paying attention to? Is there some general academic consensus on this topic at all? Do scholars today have a different outlook on this subject than scholars of a previous decade?

With this in mind, you’ll put forth your own argument on the subject and provide evidence as needed to back this argument up. This will, of course, include using sources, analysis, concrete examples, rhetorical appeals, etc. Your argument should also keep the established literature on this subject closely in mind.

Who is your audience for this paper? While I will always be one of your readers, I’d like you to imagine that you’re writing this for potential or current students in your major. This audience may either have no or limited experience in the subject, and they’re looking to your paper to prepare them for classes within their major. What context will these interested, though slightly novice, readers need? How will you convince them that your position on the subject is reasonable and well thought out?

Requirements:

* 6 pages minimum
* Consistent MLA, APA, Chicago, or AMA formatting (Your choice)
* 12 pt., Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1-inch margins
* In-text citations and a works cited page
* A minimum of 5 **academic** sources, at least 2 of them from a physical book (i.e. not from an online journal/online book)
* No more than one popular source
* A clear, but nuanced, thesis statement that makes sure to take into account your synthesis of the surrounding conversation on this topic

**Part Two:** Writing an Abstract

After you have completed writing your paper, you will write a one-paragraph summary (abstract) that includes:

1. 1-3 sentence discussion of what the established literature on this issue/debate says

2. Your thesis

3. Whether or not your argument agrees/disagrees/ agrees and disagrees/fills in a gap/refines the established literature on this subject

4. One illustrative example from your paper that substantially supports your argument

5. Some of your conclusions from your research

Note: This should be written in full-sentences and paragraph form. Do not write it as a list. While you should write your abstract after completing your paper, the abstract should be placed at the front of your folder packet, not at the back.

What is the purpose of writing an abstract for this assignment? After you’ve written a paper focusing on synthesizing your sources and the voices involved in this academic discussion, your abstract requires that you synthesize your synthesis—in other words, you’re boiling down a synthesis that took place over several paragraphs into 1-3 sentences. In order to compose this abstract, you’ll also need to have a very good understanding of the overall conversation and where your argument fits into that conversation.

Important dates:

Friday, October 30: Meet in Clark Instruction Center on the third floor of Watson Library

November 16, 18, 20 (Monday, Wednesday, Friday): Mandatory Conferences

* Monday conferences: Must have 2 pages of Part One done
* Wednesday and Friday conferences: Must have 3 pages of Part One done

Monday, November 23: Unit III Parts 1 and 2 due

This Project is Due Monday, November 23!

**Part One)**

Ability to Synthesize and Engage with Scholarly Sources

-Were you able to synthesize your sources so that they “converse” with each other? (Does your paper discuss where these sources converge? What they may be missing? Where do they disagree? Etc.) Does your paper lay out a coherent academic *conversation* rather than a list of summaries?

-Were you able to smoothly transition in and out of each quote and/or paraphrase?

Entering the Scholarly Conversation

-Does your thesis present your own argument or stance, while also keeping in mind the current academic conversation on this subject?

-Do you present relevant, specific, and developed evidence throughout the paper to support your main claim/thesis? (i.e. sources, analysis, and concrete examples?)

Form and Formatting

Was your paper properly proofread? Does your use of grammar and syntax properly support your ethos as a researcher and an academic?

Does this paper meet all the basic requirements of the paper? (Consistent formatting, page length, 5 academic sources, 2 from a physical text, etc.)

**Part Two)**

-Were you able to include all the features of the abstract genre? (See above.)

-Were you able to skillfully and coherently lay out the academic conversation/debate over this issue within your field within a few sentences? (i.e. ability to condense without losing complexity)

-Were you able to clearly convey to your reader how your paper/argument relates to the established literature on the subject?

Pleaseput this grading criteria in your folder!